

Beneficiary and Provider Services

IV. TELEPHONE INQUIRIES

A. Telephone System

The contractor shall provide an incoming telephone inquiry system. The telephone system shall be fully staffed between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. of the time zone specified in the contract or, in the absence of a specification, the predominant time zone of the region. All telephones must be staffed and able to respond throughout the entire period. The contractor shall *never exceed twenty percent (20%)*. Substitute clerks shall be trained to fill-in for absences, breaks, and lunch periods. In addition, a recorded message indicating normal business hours shall be used on the telephone lines after hours. Calls will be handled in the order they are received. The phone number(s) shall be published on the EOBs and otherwise be made known to beneficiaries, providers, HBAs, and Congressional offices. The telephone inquiry system shall be separate from the health care finder lines.

B. Responsiveness

Telephone inquiries shall be answered according to the requirements in OPM Part One, Chapter 1, Section III.E.3. Contractors may respond to telephone inquiries by letter if written response provides better service. For example, it may be difficult to reestablish telephone contact with the calling party, a written response may provide the caller with needed documentation, or a situation may call for a complex explanation which is clearer if written. The contractor staff should be trained to respond in the most appropriate, accurate manner. Telephone inquiries reporting a potential fraud or abuse situation shall be documented and referred to the contractor's Program Integrity Unit.

C. Reports

Accurate data will be compiled to complete the Monthly Workload Reports to TMA. (See OPM Part One, Chapter 3.) Other reports should provide contractor management with a historical record workload and performance data. The reports should be designed to aid in planning for future seasonal workloads, staffing, evaluating representative's performance, providing guidance, evaluating training needs, and measuring work activity. See *Part Three, Chapter 6, Section I* for the Contractor Monthly Toll-Free Telephone Report.

D. Telephone Appraisal System

The contractor shall establish a monitoring system or other method to ensure quality of performance.

